

Background

Children's Cove is a freestanding, child-friendly facility in the mid-Cape area designed to ensure victims of child sexual abuse and their non-offending family members have access to support and services in a safe, respectful, and compassionate environment.

Established in 1997, Children's Cove, the Cape & Islands Child Advocacy Center, is a safe and welcoming place where children who have been sexually abused, severely physically abused or witness to domestic violence can begin their journey of healing.

Children's Cove provides a compassionate, efficient and child-friendly facility for child abuse intervention. Children and families journey through a streamlined process which reduces the chances children are re-traumatized and preserves the best evidence for investigators.

Children's Cove staff facilitates a collaboration of social and legal agencies to protect and provide counseling referrals for child sexual abuse victims and assist in the investigation and prosecution of their abusers.



Children's Cove

Children's Cove is situated in an undisclosed (to the public) location in Barnstable. Situated on a secluded lot surrounded by a playground, picnic table, patio and numerous acres of wooded paths, it is a secure and private location where children and non-offending caregivers can come to feel safe and begin the path to healing. The building includes a medical suite and state-of-the-art forensic interview equipment and facilities. We share our physical address only with law enforcement, Department of Children and Families, The Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office and children and families who visit Children's Cove. The family- and child-friendly facility is a former residence that has been decorated as a home with toys, games, child-friendly amenities and plenty of welcoming and inviting signage and appeal. It is our hope that children and families impacted by child sexual abuse find Children's Cove a haven and safe place to be as they disclose and process their abuse.



Our Mission

Provide coordinated and comprehensive multidisciplinary services to child victims of sexual abuse/serious physical abuse and their families.

Our Vision

Children's Cove will be recognized as the foremost advocacy center for ensuring the comprehensive care of child victims of sexual abuse/serious physical abuse on Cape Cod and the Islands.



Our Values

- Respect and advocacy for the rights and safety of children
- Promote awareness and prevention for the community and partner agencies through education
- Enhance our collaboration with partner and community agencies
- Dedicated to continued education for all Children's Cove staff and associates
- Recognize the need to be culturally sensitive and aware of the diverse populations of the community
- Involve the non-offending family members as an essential element in the healing process



Leadership

STACY GALLAGHER, DIRECTOR

Stacy Gallagher has held the position of Director of Children's Cove: The Cape & Islands Advocacy Center servicing Barnstable, Nantucket & Dukes Counties for 9 years. She directs the physical operations, budget, staffing and overall management of Children's Cove. From 2001 to 2006, she was the Director of the Rhode Island Child Advocacy Center in Providence, RI, and served as Forensic Interview Specialist from 2003 until 2006.

As part of her career working for child advocacy centers, Gallagher has trained numerous individuals in the field of child sexual abuse, including ongoing training at multiple community agencies, schools, youth-serving organizations and multiple state and local police academies.

Gallagher earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Rhode Island College, Providence, Rhode Island and a Master of Science degree in Forensic Science: Advanced Investigations from the University of New Haven, West Haven, Connecticut. She lives in Mattapoisett with her husband, Jim, and two young children.



Leadership

LENNY FONTES, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Lenny Fontes is a 15-year veteran at Children's Cove and oversees all direct services including forensic interviewing, mental health services, training and outreach and family advocacy and maintains working relationships with partner agencies, Department of Children and Families, law enforcement and the District Attorney of the Cape and the Islands. Prior to this role, he worked as a juvenile probation officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Texas. He holds a BS from Bridgewater State University and currently resides in Plymouth with his wife and two teenagers.



The Forensic Interview

At Children's Cove, the forensic interview is conducted by National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) trained professionals in a child-friendly, developmentally appropriate setting. The purpose of the forensic interview is for the child to speak his or her truth. Because children are often groomed by their perpetrator and because this abuser is someone they know in 90% of cases (in 50% of the cases, the abuser is a family member), getting key information from the child is often difficult. The forensic interview is designed to elicit a child's unique information when there are concerns of possible abuse. The forensic interview provides the child the opportunity to talk with a trained professional about their experience and it is often the cornerstone of the criminal investigation of child sexual abuse.

The National Children's Alliance (NCA) Standards for Accreditation states that forensic interviews are to be conducted in a manner that is legally sound, of a neutral, fact-finding nature and are coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing. Our interviewers have completed a competency-based child abuse forensic interview training that includes child development and 40 hours of training.



Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

Through a partnership with Cape Cod Healthcare and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Children's Cove provides on-site evidence collection and specialized medical exams by a Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (PediSANE) for children who have disclosed sexual abuse. The Massachusetts Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner provides direct care to child victims under the age of 12 in a child-friendly environment. Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners provide coordinated, expert forensic and medical care in accordance with "Do No Harm" principles for child victims of sexual assault.



Mental Health Services

The Children's Cove Mental Health Program offers assessment and coordination of appropriate, trauma-informed mental health services for children and families affected by child sexual abuse, severe physical abuse or witness to domestic violence. Our mental health coordinator is a licensed mental health professional trained to assess the child and family's mental health needs and provides support and care coordination. The Mental Health Program also includes the Children's Cove Trauma Informed Provider Network (TIPNet). This training program and referral network of mental health practitioners throughout the Cape and the Islands specializes in trauma-informed interventions such as ARC and TF-CBT. These nationally recognized, evidenced-based treatment modalities are proven to expedite the healing process and decrease the long-term, adverse effects of traumatic experiences. Children's Cove TIPNet strives to access community needs, strengthen partnerships and facilitate comprehensive trainings and workshops to raise the standard of care for providers who work with trauma-affected children and families across all disciplines.



Family Advocate/Victim Advocate

Families who have been impacted by child sexual abuse sometimes require advocacy and support throughout the criminal justice process. Children's Cove supports children and families find housing, insurance and other stop-gap measures that continue to protect the non-offending family members throughout the judicial process. We also provide information on victim's rights including victim compensation and protective matters as well as general support for child victims and their family. In addition, referrals and information for other community resources are given on an as-needed basis. Often the primary caregivers find themselves without the resources to leave the home and separate from the offending family member. Children's Cove helps them find access to insurance and mental health services for themselves as they process and grieve the abuse to their children.



Training and Outreach

Children's Cove is dedicated to enhancing the capabilities of those individuals and agencies who work with children. As a central resource for information and technical assistance, we offer a broad array of educational opportunities for agencies, organizations and the community. Presentation topics include but are not limited to: mandated reporting; the truth about child sexual abuse; advanced first responder to child sexual abuse and assault for EMS; online safety; child sexual exploitation as well as student presentations appropriately tailored to content and age.



Multi-disciplinary Team

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Barnstable
- Brewster
- Bourne
- Chatham
- Dennis
- Eastham
- Falmouth
- Harwich
- Martha's Vineyard
- Mashpee
- Nantucket
- Provincetown
- Sandwich
- Truro
- Wellfleet
- Yarmouth



MA Department
of Children and Families



CAPE COD HEALTHCARE



Membership in Child Advocacy Associations



NATIONAL
CHILDREN'S
ALLIANCE®



Partner Agencies



MA Department
of Mental Health



MA Department
of Children and Families



CAPE COD HEALTHCARE

Local and State
Law Enforcement
Agencies

